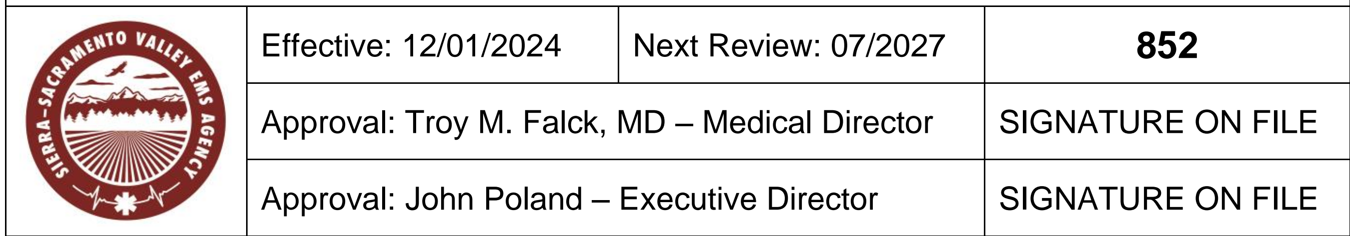
Sierra – Sacramento Valley EMS Agency Program Policy			
Patient Restraint Mechanisms			
	Effective: 12/01/2024	Next Review: 07/2027	**852**
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PURPOSE:

To provide guidelines on the use of restraint mechanisms by EMS personnel for patients who are violent, potentially violent, or who may harm themselves or others.

AUTHORITY:

A. HSC, Div. 2.5, § 1797.204, 1797.206, 1797.218, 1797.220, 1798, & 1798.2.

B. WIC § 5150.

PRINCIPLES:

A. Restraint mechanisms are to be used only when necessary, in situations where the patient is potentially violent or is exhibiting behavior that is dangerous to self or others.

B. Prehospital personnel must consider that aggressive or violent behavior may be a symptom of medical conditions such as head trauma, hypoxia, alcohol or drug related problems, hypoglycemia or other metabolic disorders, stress, or psychiatric disorders.

C. The method of restraint used shall allow for adequate monitoring of vital signs and shall not restrict the ability to protect the patient's airway or compromise vascular or neurological status.

D. Restraints applied by law enforcement require the officer to remain available at the scene and/or during transport to remove or adjust the restraints for patient safety.

POLICY:

A. General Principals

1. Restrained patients shall not be transported in a prone position. EMS personnel must ensure that the patient's position does not compromise their respiratory/ circulatory systems and does not preclude any necessary medical intervention to protect or manage the airway should vomiting occur.

2. Monitor vital signs and be prepared to provide airway/ventilation management.

3. The base and/or receiving hospital shall be informed as soon as possible that the patient has been restrained, the type of restraint used and the reason for restraint.

B. Forms of Restraint

1. Physical Restraint:

- Restraint devices applied by EMS personnel must be padded soft restraints that will allow for quick release.
- Restrained extremities should be evaluated for pulse quality, capillary refill, color, temperature, nerve, and motor function immediately following application and every 10 minutes thereafter. It is recognized that the evaluation of vascular and neurological status requires patient cooperation, and thus may be difficult or impossible to monitor.
- Restraints shall be applied in such a manner that they do not cause vascular, neurological, or respiratory compromise. Any abnormal findings require the restraints to be removed and reapplied, or supporting documentation as to why restraints could not be removed and reapplied.
- Restraints shall not be attached to movable side rails of a gurney.
- If the patient is actively spitting; a surgical mask or oxygen mask (at appropriate flow rate) may be placed over the patient’s mouth to protect EMS personnel and others. If this method fails, a light weight, sheer, protective mesh hood may be used. When the mesh hood is placed over the patient’s head, their mouth and/or nose shall never be obstructed, and the patient’s airway/respiratory status shall be continuously monitored. The mesh hood shall never be tightened in any manner to secure it around the patient’s neck.
- The following forms of restraint shall not be applied by EMS personnel:
  - Hard plastic ties or any restraint device requiring a key to remove.
  - Restraining a patient’s hands and feet behind the patient.
  - “Sandwich” restraints, using backboard, scoop-stretcher, or flats.

2. Chemical Restraint:

- For patients who are combative, such that harm to self or others is likely, consult treatments outlined in protocols M-11 and M-11P (as applicable).

C. Law Enforcement Applied Restraints

1. The general principles of this policy shall pertain to patients with restraints applied by law enforcement who are treated/transported by EMS personnel.

2. Restraint devices applied by law enforcement must provide sufficient slack to allow the patient to straighten their abdomen/chest and to take full tidal volume breaths.

3. Restraint devices applied by law enforcement require the officer's continued presence to ensure patient and scene safety. The officer should accompany the patient in the ambulance or follow the ambulance during transport. Patients in custody/arrest remain the responsibility of law enforcement.

4. At the discretion of law enforcement, applied restraint devices may be replaced by EMS restraints if doing so does not threaten the safety of the patient and/or EMS personnel.

D. Interfacility Transport of Psychiatric Patients

Two-point, locking, padded cuff and belt restraints and/or two-point locking, padded ankle restraints may only be used during interfacility transport of psychiatric patients on a 5150 hold, under the following circumstances:

1. Transport personnel must be provided with a written restraint order from the transferring physician/designee as part of the transfer record.

2. Transport personnel shall always have immediate access to the restraint key during transport.

3. Restrained extremities should be evaluated for pulse quality, capillary refill, color, temperature, nerve, and motor function immediately following application and every 10 minutes thereafter. Any abnormal findings require the restraints to be adjusted or removed and reapplied, or supporting documentation as to why restraints could not be adjusted or removed and reapplied.

E. Documentation

The following information shall be documented on the patient care report:

1. Reason for restraint.

2. Type of restraint utilized and identity of personnel applying restraint.

3. Assessment of the vascular/neurological status of the restrained extremities and cardiac/respiratory status of the restrained patient.